

# (Seeming) Irregularity as a Clue to the Origin of Words

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# The starting point

- Research into the (West-)Uralic sound history has made a lot of progress during the recent years (as a result of publications by A. Aikio, R. Grünthal, M. Heikkilä, J. Häkkinen, P. Kallio, P. Rahkonen, J. Saarikivi etc.); for example, the discovery of the triggering causes of the so-called *length shift* (see Kallio 2012, Aikio 2012, 2013; as to the chronology of the sound changes in question, see Heikkilä 2012a, 2014)

Consequently, some sound correspondences that previously seemed irregular are fully regular after all. As an implication previously unknown or uncertain cognates have been found.

- e.g. Finnish/Finnic *hanhi* : *hanhen* 'goose' and Mord *šenže* 'duck'
- Until recently, they were not recognized as cognates because the (initial syllable) vowels did not seem to match (Grünthal 2012: 331).
- But they do match (Heikkilä 2014: 86): *hanhi* = *šenže*, because Fin *hanhe* < PFin *\*šānše* < Proto-West-Uralic *\*šānšä* < PBalt *(\*)žānsis* 'goose' < PIE *\*ǵ<sup>h</sup>ans* 'goose'
- The relative chronology of the involved sound changes: the Balto-Slavic satemization preceded *\*ä-ä > a-e/i*, and thus the formation of (Middle) Proto-Finnic (see Heikkilä 2014: 86).
- cf. e.g. the relatively younger (loan)words *härkä* 'ox, bull' and *hämä-läinen* 'Tavast' < *\*šämä*; cf. SaS *saemie*, Saln *säämi* 'Sami' (< *\*sämä* or *\*šämä*) and *Suomi* : *Suomen* : *suoma-lainen* 'Finland/Finn' (< *\*soome* : *\*sooma* << ? *\*sämä* or *\*šämä* or *\*ćämä*)

And the progress has not concerned the sound history of the directly documented West-Uralic languages only ...

- Former existence of extinct West-Uralic idiom(s), “Para-West-Uralic language(s)”, on Finnish soil was suggested and motivated by Pauli Rahkonen (e.g. 2013; see also e.g. Saarikivi 2006). Further evidence was presented by Mikko Heikkilä (2014, 2015a).
- Borrowing of common nouns and proper names from language A to language B via a substrate language S is not uncommon.

# The origin of the Finno-Saami word *ilves* 'lynx'

- Fin *ilves* : *ilveksen*, Veps *ilbez*, Liv *īlbõks*, SaN *albbas* 'lynx' < *\*ilpeksi* < ?
- Latin *volpes/vulpes* 'fox'; Avestan *urupi* 'marten'; **Middle Persian *gurbag* 'cat' (< *\*wlpēk-*), Lithuanian *vilpišys, vilpišas, vilpišius* 'wild cat' < PIE/NWIE *\*wlp-iksios* → PWU *\*wūlpiksi* > *\*ūlpiksi* > ParaWU *\*ilpiksi* 'lynx' → EPF *\*ilpeksi* > *ilves* : *ilveksen* and *albbas* 'lynx'**
- *Lynx lynx* = Order: Carnivora, Family: Felidae, Subfamily: Felinae,  
Genus: *Lynx*
- *Felis silvestris* = Order: Carnivora, Family: Felidae, Subfamily: Felinae,  
Genus: *Felis*
- NB the wild cat (*Felis silvestris*) is somewhat bigger than the domestic cat (*Felis catus*), and there were no domestic cats in northern Europe in ancient times.

- The assumed sound changes required by the etymology are not bold, because  
PU \**w*\_ /labial vowel > *ø* in all known West-Uralic languages and  
PU \**ü* > *i/e* in Proto-Sami and Mordvinic (much later in Livonian, too)

- In fact, some Para-West-Uralic sound changes might be discovered (cf. Rahkonen 2013, Heikkilä 2014, 2015a):
  - \**w* >  $\emptyset$  (this presentation and Heikkilä 2015a)
  - \**ü* > *i* (this presentation and Heikkilä 2015a)
  - \**ä* > *e* *Koit-ere* “Kaita-järvi”; cf. Mord *eʹ-ke* ‘lake’ (Rahkonen 2013)
  - \**e* > *i* *Ina-ri* “Enä-järvi”; cf. Mord *inä* ‘big’ (Heikkilä 2014)

# Other possible lexical borrowings from/via Para-West-Uralic

- 1) *lempi* : *lemmen* 'erotic love', Est *lemmed* 'sparks', *lembida* 'to burn, to scorch' = Fin *lämpö* 'warmth', *lämmin* : *lämpimän* 'warm', *lämmetä* : *lämpenee* 'to become warm' (< \**lämpi* : *lämpen*); cf. Mordvinic *lembe* 'warm(th)' (Heikkilä 2015b)
- 2) Fin *impi* : *immen* 'virgin (= a sexually intact woman)'
  - cf. Fin *umpi* 'closed, not open' : *ummessa* : *ummella* <- PGerm \**umbi* 'about, around' < NWIE \**ṁb<sup>h</sup>i* 'about, around' -> PFin \**ümpe*-rä > Fin *ympäri* 'around'  
cf. *immenkalvo*, *impeiskalvo*, *immytkalvo* 'hymen'
  - NWIE \**ṁb<sup>h</sup>i* -> Proto-West-Uralic \**ümpi* > Para-West-Uralic \**impi*/\**impeš* etc. -> PFin \**impi*/\**impeš* etc. > Finnic *impi*, *impeiskalvo*, *impu*, *impe*
- 3) Fin *palkia* 'to roam in flocks (about reindeer)' <- Sa *bálgat*, *baalgedh*, *palgađ* 'to move restlessly (about reindeer or human beings disturbed by mosquitos)' < PSa \**pälGë-Däk* <- ParaWU \**palki*- <- PGerm \**walkijan* 'to move to and fro (when being disturbed)' > ON *velkja* 'to go to and fro; to roam'; cf. ON *valka* 'to roam'.



# Paralänsiurali suomalaisten *hengessä* mukana?

- Latin *anima* 'breath', OIr. *anim* 'soul', ON *andi* 'breath, spirit' etc. < PIE/NWIE  $*h_2anh_1i-$  'breath, spirit' → PWU *\*šänki* > ParaWU *\*šenki* → MPF *\*šenki* : *\*šenken* > Finnish/Finnic *henki* : *hengen* 'breath, spirit; person'

# Concerning proper names

Fin **Tampere** <- \**TamBër* << \****timpilä***

cf. SaN *dappal*

< WU \****tümpilä*** <- PG \****dumpilan***

Fin **Simpele** <- ***Simpel*** < \****Timpel*** < \****timpilä***

neither (proper) Sami nor (proper) Finnic

See further in Heikkilä 2012b

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